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EAST AND WEST SERIES

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No. 98 November, 1965

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MY MOTHERLAND

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T. L. VASWANI

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EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/246

MY MOTHERLAND

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MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

The perusal of your journal has afforded me much inner joy.

The work of Sri T. L. Vaswani will do much in the way of restoring India once again to its former spiritual greatness.

The whole world is groaning, today, under the merciless powers of gross materialism which can only end in utter failure. Therefore it gives me great joy of soul to learn of the great work, based on loving service to humanity, in which Sri T. L. Vaswani is engaged. Being founded on love, the noble work will assuredly be successful, both in time and eternity.

I trust that Sri Vaswani will long be spared to continue in his work of sacrifice.

Happy are those who are taught by this noble soul, for such souls are rare in this world. In the teachings of Sri Vaswani one is linked up with the rhythm of Eternal Truth. Deep calls unto deep, and a response arises in the soul. Would that all people of the world could read the message contained in your journal. Truly the need is great.

My greetings to Sri Vaswani.

Matthew McKay
Brighton, Sussex, (England)

I have read your journal with interest. Here, in the Theosophical Society in France, we are moved by the same ideal and, in other circumstances, we try to serve mankind in the same spirit. I have even looked for some articles that I could translate and publish in our own magazine.

We wish you every success in your high endeavour for the good of humanity.

P. Thorin
France

Printed by P. H. Ramchandani at Lokasangraha Press, 1786, Sadashiv Peth, Poona-2, and published by him from Gita Publishing House, 10 Sadhu Vaswani Road, Poona-1.

Editor and Owner : J. P. VASWANI

This issue : 50 P. or 1s. or 20 cents

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MY MOTHERLAND*

I THANK you for the opportunity you have given me to meet you this evening. You have asked me to speak to you on "*Amar Desh,*" "Our Motherland." You, brothers and sisters of the Congress in Bengal! you have dedicated your thoughts and deeds to the Motherland, and your sacrifices are offerings lit before the Lord. There is much I have to learn from you.

Over four decades have passed since I left Bengal for my far-off corner in Sind. Bengal was the land of aspiration to independence, of longing for national freedom. What Bengal thought, India echoed from end to end. During my brief, beautiful stay in Bengal, so many years ago, I came in contact with some of the great leaders of thought and life in Bengal,—Arabindo Ghosh, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Surrendra Nath Banerji, Bepin Chandra Pal, Subosh Mullick, Satish Chakarvarty and that bold *sanyasin* of Indian Nationalism, the man whose life was a blend of meditation and action, Upadhya Brahmabandhav.

I came in touch with them all. They and others were voices of the Mother's great word, *mantra*, message :— "*Bande Matram!*" Is Bengal different today? A generation ago, I saw the youths of Bengal walking by the river-bank and breathing out the aspiration :—"Mother! Mother! when wilt thou break the chains?"

I survey the situation of India, I hope, in a spirit of detachment. I belong to no political organisation. I try to look at things from the angle of a detached spectator. I survey the situation in Bengal and other parts of India.

* Being notes of an address delivered, in 1944, to the Congress Workers' Sangha, Calcutta.

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In many places, I find young men are becoming servile imitators of Western forms and Western institutions. And then, sisters and brothers, big tears stand in mine eyes. For Europe today is in decline : Europe today suffers from forces of disintegration.

Several years ago, a book was written by an eminent German thinker, a student of world history. The name of this book, in two volumes, is *Decay of the West*. The author of this book, Spengler, surveys the story of civilisations of the world. And he tells us how, in the West, one civilisation after another has declined and disappeared. And today, says Spengler, we see Europe crumbling to its fall. The world-war is a witness to the truth of Spengler's view. Europe is declining. Why, then, should India's young men imitate Europe? There are groups who turn to India for a new world-view, a new word of power. A friend of mine, Professor Schwiedland of the University of Vienna, is a translator in German of some of my books. In the course of a beautiful letter to me, this friend wrote to say that he dreamt of a day when India's influence would travel to Europe and Indian ideals would shape the life of Europe. Prof. Schwiedland spoke of "Indianisation of Europe!"

Yet is there not a principle of renewal in nature? See how new flowers, new forms, new colours appear in spring! In nature is hidden eternal youth : and youth is the energy of renewal. Is there not a principle of renewal in the life of nations, too? And renewal means *shakti*. Freedom grows out of *shakti*,—not debates, not paper schemes, not meetings, not speeches and arguments! Eternal *shakti*, eternal energy lies hidden in the heart of the Mother. It has but to awake, re-awake, in order that India may become again a nation of the strong, a leader of the nations. Even as the Ganges floweth from the hidden heights of the Hima-

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layas, so doth freedom flow as a wave of energy from the hidden depths. Freedom has come to us again : let Her not find that we are not ready to receive Her!

THREE groups of servers are India's urgent need, at this hour. The first group I shall call "volunteers,"—volunteers of India, volunteers of the nation. I am afraid, we still are thinking in terms of the "Hindu," the "Mussalman," the "Christian," etc. Why can't we think in terms of India? Volunteers of India are needed, volunteers of the nation.

What a sweet name, India! This name was given to the land by Greek travellers. They were impressed, among other things, with the "purity" of the Indian people. The Greek travellers found that India's women were pure and India's men were pure. They said this was a land of the "pure." India is derived from the Sanskrit word, "Indu," which means "moon." Indu, the moon, is a symbol of purity, and so they called this land "India."

The word "Hindustan" is equally significant. This word is derived from the word "Sindhustan." "Sindhustan" means "the abode of the Sindhu." In Sind flows the Sindhu, the strong river whose praises are sung in Vedic *mantras*. From the word "Sindhustan" you have the word "Hindustan." "Sindhustan" means "the land of the Sindhu." And the meaning of the word, "Sindhu," is that which flows on, flows on, flows on. "Sindhu" is a symbol of progress. As Tennyson tells us in his two beautiful lines :—

Men may come and men may go :
But I go on for ever.

This is the voice of the river Sindhu :—"Men may come and men may go, but I go on for ever." Kingdoms have

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come and kingdoms have crumbled, but the Sindhu goes on! Dynasties have appeared and disappeared, but the Sindhu flows on! Sindhustan means the land of the Sindhu : Sindhustan means the land of the people who go on, go on, go on.

Unroll the pages of history : what do you find? Kingdoms and empires have appeared and disappeared, but our beloved Motherland goes on! Hindustan means, literally, a land of eternal progress. Hindustan means, literally, a land of the people who march onward, march forward. Onward! Forward! This should be the motto of the people of this ancient country.

An inhabitant of Egypt said to me, one day :—"Why don't you call yourselves Hindis? You of Hindustan are all Hindis."

Who, then, is a volunteer? A volunteer is one who pays homage to the nation, who thinks of India first. India first, India first : this is the watchword and this is the *mantra* of every one who would be a volunteer of the nation.

What do these words signify :—"India first?" "India first" means, be manly! Develop the culture of manhood! A volunteer of the nation must grow in the spirit of manhood. And volunteers of the nation should celebrate hero-days.

Bengal has thrown up a number of heroes : and other parts of India, too, have thrown up, again and again, mighty heroes. So is India's history, for me, a *shastra*, a scripture.

Some years ago, I went to Rajputana and there was told, in detail, a thrilling story, the story of one of the greatest heroes of Rajputana. His name is Rana Pratap Singh. He stands up all alone to face the Moghul power. Princes and friends forsake him, one by one : and the Moghul army is after Rana Pratap : he is not dismayed. His "mother's

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milk," says the Rajput chronicle, "is resplendent in him!"

Single-handed and for twenty-five years, Rana Pratap runs from rock to rock : Rana Pratap wanders far and wide. For some time he hides himself in the forest : savage beasts surround him. His wife and children are with him, and there are days this great one has not food to give them.

And the wife says to him :—"My Lord! you starve : I starve : but I cannot see our little ones starve."

Then Rana Pratap says to her :—"O thou who art dear to me as the breath of my life, listen! I never shall surrender the honour of my race. I shall not go to make peace with the Moghul who is pursuing me. Better to starve and die than rob my race of her honour."

They sang to me in Rajputana a moving little song about Rana Pratap. And this song revealed the secret of this hero :—"Pratap renounced wealth and lands but he never dishonoured his race! The secret of his strength was his soul of manliness!"

THEN there is the second group I think of. The first group I call "volunteers." They may stay anywhere they like. But they must guard India's honour. They may be *grahstis*, they may earn money, but they must guard India's honour.

The second group I call "wanderers." They go, from place to place, taking with them the message of India and of India's great ones. They go to the villages, they go to meet the poor ones, they go to meet those who are in need and in suffering. They speak to the village-folk of India and Indian ideals.

What work have they before them? Firstly, the "wanderers" go and tell the village-folk to build their bodies. We have long neglected our bodies, I am afraid.

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Build up the body! I sometimes say :—Body-building is nation-building! Build up your bodies : see that your bodies are strong.

And the second thing the "wanderers" do is to ask the village-folk to stick to "swadeshi." The village-folk are being invaded by other forces. They must wear swadeshi clothes.

And the third thing the "wanderer" is to do is to tell the village-folk of the great heroes of history. I do not think that English education has justified itself : and to the village-folk you must not give the current type of education. Give them folk stories, stories from ancient books, stories from the great lives of the heroes of India, stories from the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. So may the village folk grow in the spirit heroic!

Shivaji was one of the great heroes of humanity. Most of you, alas! have forgotten him. What education did Shivaji receive? His mother was his teacher, and she gave Shivaji thrilling stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These stories built up the early life of Shivaji, and Shivaji became a hero!

Then the "wanderer" must look to the villagers' problem of poverty. The "wanderer" must share his bread with the village-folk. Great is their suffering! The "wanderer" must serve them when they are ill, stricken with malaria. And the "wanderer" must start village-unions to help swadeshi and cooperation.

And fifthly, the "wanderer" must teach the village-folk to turn away from decadent civilisation to simplicity of nature. The civilisation of your cities is decadent. Its other name is "decadence."

Here is the five-fold programme which a "wanderer" has before him when he goes out to serve the village-folk.

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A THIRD group is, also, needed. May I speak of it as the group of "worshippers"? Young men! I ask you not to be staggered at the mention of the word "worshipper." Worship, literally, means "worth-ship" : and what is worthship? Worthship is appreciation of worth. Worthship or worship, therefore, is reverence for the noble. When I offer reverence of my heart to a man, I worship him. Worship is homage : worship is reverence to what is "above" us!

As the "wanderer" goes from place to place, from village to village, I believe, he begins to see his limits. The "wanderer" begins to understand that it is not open to him to reach all the villagers. Goethe tells us that if we would work, we must realise our "limitations." Every worker must realise his limitations. There is so much to do, and there is so little which I can do. The "wanderer," as he grows in experience, comes to understand that he can't reach many villages, that he can't reach many village-folk. Then he says :—"I dedicate, I offer my work unto Thee, O Lord!" And if the worker does not believe in "God," he, at any rate, believes in a *shakti*, a power that thrills the world from end to end. And the worker, the sincere worker, the "wanderer" says :—Oh *Shakti!* I offer my work unto thee!

This dedication is "worship." A group of worshippers is needed. When the "wanderer" goes, from place to place, and does work for the village-folk, many praise him. Does pride enter into his heart? Does he become egoistic? In the measure in which you are egoistic, your service declines. But when the "wanderer" becomes a "worshipper" and learns to offer his work unto God, unto the Eternal *Shakti*, he grows in humility. Humility is the strength of the worker. When humility enters your heart, you become a "worshipper." Bands of "worshippers"

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are needed for the service of India. They understand that what is needed is not "numbers" but "quality" and "character" of the workers. So many of the village-folk cannot be trained immediately. A minority can save the nation : but it must be a disciplined minority.

A lad was shot through the body by some men who came with rifles to force open his father's shop. And dying with his head on the knees of a faithful servant, the boy said :—"I hate no one; I love my Mother!" "I hate no one, but I love my Mother," so speaks the true "worshipper."

In these tragic times, friends, I have, again and again, sat in my corner of silence. I have thought of India : I have meditated upon India, the Mother! And sometimes, I have seen a storm, and I have heard the noises of the coming days. Then have I cried, "O India, my Mother!"

I have heard the noise of the storm. Who knows the storm may be a prelude to the fulfilment of India's mission? And then, going deeper into my meditation, I have seen the Mother unharmed in the midst of the storm,—untouched by the tempest! I have seen the Mother riding the storm : I have seen the Mother riding the noise and chaos of the crumbling world,—in Her hand the blue banner!

Then? What then? I have seen the old epoch going : I have seen a new epoch rising! And I breathe out an aspiration that you and I, in waking thoughts, in dreams at night, in our work, in our worship, in our daily activities, in the inner thoughts of the mind, in the aspiration of the heart, think of Her, the Mother, serve Her, the Mother, and be ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in the honour and freedom of the Mother, in the coming days!

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O YE THAT ARE YOUNG!

TODAY many have turned away from the Rishi-ideals. Hence *bhoga* and softness. Hence suffering and unrest.

Prophets of *shakti* were the Rishis. And they found the secret of *shakti* in simplicity and silent service, in the beauty of *brahmacharya* and the sweet wisdom of the Spirit.

In this message of the Rishis is the hope of India, the hope of a new civilisation.

In my heart is a dream,—that of a re-birth, a re-creation of India. And I look to the young to turn the dream into a rich reality. For youth means idealism,—means faith and hope and love. Youth means *shakti*, vitality, creativeness.

You that are young are a symbol of the Future. May you make it mighty in the strength and inspiration of the blended wisdom of the East and the West!

IN my wanderings, I found a new awakening among youths. They are the destined builders of new India. But they must become conscious of their immortal heritage and responsibility, as sons and daughters of immortal sages. No less must they understand the new world-forces of the modern age which is largely economic, essentially scientific and critical of castes, customs, creeds and authorities.

My appeal to the young is to live the simple life, and be linked up with the village-folk in that service which is humble and, therefore, rich,—the service of the poor.

I AM not a politician.

The essential problem of India, as I see it, is the problem

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of conscious control of the *shakti* which the nation has, with a view to re-shape national life, and enable India to fulfil her *dharma* (function) in the new world of freedom.

My test of any programme is, does it help in waking up the will-to-*shakti?*

No programme of a retreatist character can help, nor any programme of an imitative character.

India's creative *shakti* needs to be drawn out and developed, not to make India in the mould of America or England or Russia, but to make India herself, a new nation,—an India greater and mightier than she was even in her ancient past.

Back of politics lie socio-economic forces. And a programme to help must solve the problem of the starving, shivering millions of India.

It cannot solve until it (1) copes with the new world of science and machine, (2) faces the facts of our social order and the Indian environment, and (3) co-operates with the new world-forces.

Isolation will help India no more than imitation.

I believe Tolstoy glimpsed a great truth when he said that the people of the Orient were called to recover that Liberty, which the peoples of the Occident had lost almost without chance of recovery.

ABOLISH religion,—is the cry I hear today, in this "secular" state. Abolish religion, they say, and imitate this Western country or that!

I do not hold that religion is devitalising. I believe profoundly that religion is the energy that builds and beautifies. Religion is strength.

I hear of noble-hearted atheists. I know of no long-lived civilisation built on atheism. In Soviet Russia, there

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is a new interest in religion.

But religion is not superstition, not fanaticism, not touch-me-not-ism.

A wrong conception of religion has harmed India and the world. Cast-rigidity is not religion. Weakness is not religion.

India's manhood lies suppressed. The suppressed manhood, the imprisoned *shakti*, cannot be released by counsels or programmes of imitation. An organism develops in obedience to the law of its own being. And a nation is an organism. To make India in the image of this Western country or that is to doom India to a path of decline. Religion is a builder of culture : and there is much in our transmitted tradition which has a value for the world.

India yet has a message to give to the modern nations,—the message of *Brahmavidya*, the message of the Rishis, the message of a new creative life in the Spirit.

The World-Spirit calls her to a new service of humanity. Therefore, must she turn aside from the easy paths of imitation. India must be herself.

So many, alas! revel in radical denial of God. And this denial develops even into a hatred of God. And all this in the name of nationalism! Yet true nationalism should really express the heart of the nation. And is not religion the heart of India?

I shudder to think of a nationalism denying God, and a new generation growing without faith in the Life Eternal! Faith in God is the fundamental and central heritage of India.

There is but one message for India and the world,—the religion of the Spirit.

There is but one work to do,—to awaken individuals so that they may become centres of life, the new Life of the Spirit. Individuals matter,—individuals, not organisations.

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Organisations of power, as distinguished from groups of *satsang*, only imprison the fundamental values and stifle the living inspiration. There is an immense spiritual power, an *atmashakti*. It finds expression through individuals, through dedicated lives. It is often obstructed by the mechanism of big organisation. And a prayer of my heart is that more and more dedicated individuals may arise to vindicate the Life of the Spirit in these days of India's piteous need.

MANY counsels, many programmes are before the country. I know but one thing. I preach but one programme,—love of Humanity, and service of the poor. I believe profoundly that in love, in service, in a religion of Humanity, in humble service of the poor, is the reconciliation of all the warring creeds of the world.

This, then, is the word I pass on to you that are young :—Aspire to be silent servants of the poor! Silent servants : for true service is not noisy. Flowers bloom,—silently. Stars shine,—silently. The noisy waves break and retire. It is the silent ones that come up in strength. In silence is *shakti*. And the faith in me is strong that on the path of silent service of the poor will India find her true Freedom and her God.

THE ancient message of the immortal Rishi is India's urgent need :—"Be ye lamps to yourselves!" Cults of imitation are abroad but will not help. Not imitation but a new creation is my *mantra* to young men. Therefore, I plead for a new study of Indian ideals as reflected in her culture and history.

This does not mean that the modern must be rejected.

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No! A new world is in the making : and it is as undesirable as it is impossible to reject the modern. We must respect it : we must, also, learn to relate it to Indian Ideals. Modern science and technics, modern experiments in industry and politics must be studied. But the creative ideals which made India great in the long ago must not be rejected. They have a message for modern India and the modern world.

One of these ideals is the ideal of *brahmacharya.* "Be ye lights to yourselves!" The light of the body is *brahmacharya.* A cult of pleasure or *bhoga* is becoming increasingly popular with many young men. Not a few today find fault with the ideals of morality. A new affirmation of the message of *brahmacharya* is needed. *Brahmacharya*-building is nation-building.

The light of the mind is the spirit of questioning. Young men must be reflective. They must not blindly accept the view of this great man or that. They must learn to put questions.

There is the light of the heart. He has this light who converts his knowledge into service of the poor. Education of the heart is urgently needed. Men of true love for the poor are needed. Of the forty-four crores of Indians, thirty-five crores are poor. India means these thirty-five crores, the great masses whom alike Government and the well-to-do have long neglected. In bands of young people, eager to serve the broken, bleeding ones of India, is her hope and her strength. Swaraj is service of the poor.

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SONTOKU AND FREE INDIA

In this period of new political reconstruction of India, young Indians will do well to study the lives of some of the world's selfless patriots. One of them was Sontoku.

He was born in 1787; he died in 1856. He asked that there should be no tombstone erected to his memory. But he has, today, a temple in the heart of every one of his countrymen. The secret of the man was his intense feeling of unity with the poor. With childlike, wonder-filled eyes, he moved among them, serving them with singular devotion.

A man of great learning and strong common-sense, he was sought by chiefs and lords. They gave him districts to manage : he restored to prosperity ruined villages. He helped with food and clothes forty thousand starving people in one district. He saved many more villagers from famine. But he himself was always simple in dress and diet and, as the greatest only are, he was in his simplicity sublime.

Rice and a vegetable soup and water was his food. His clothes were of cotton of the cheapest kind. "It is enough," he said, "if our clothes protect us from the cold and our food keeps us from hunger. Beyond this they profit us nothing and simply hamper us." On another occasion, he said that it was necessary to live simply in order to be able to give away to others.

A chief invited him once to organise relief operations for the benefit of starving people in a district. When he arrived, the chief sent him through a servant a fine court dress as "reward." The patriot said he had not come there to receive rewards : he wanted rice and corn to distribute to the needy. "I cannot," he added, "accept such useless gifts. Please return it to your master."

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The house he lived in was a poor looking thing, but there sat the great one preaching to young men. He did not ask for large audiences : he was happy in the company of a few young men. And a strange quiet fell on them when he spoke of the simple life, of how to avoid the world's gilded vanities and greet God's simplicities that wander in the world asking for home in the hearts of the poor in spirit.

He taught young men to be simple : he also asked them to be sincere. "One sincere mind," he said, "will move the gods, and heaven and earth will be moved, too." But the test of sincerity, he urged, was sacrifice. To act in complete sincerity, he taught, was to spend one's all in the service of others. "My way," he said, " is to sacrifice oneself to save others!"

He practised the truth he preached. He refused to receive a salary for his work in the villages. "Why," he said, "should men who want to help their country receive a salary for doing so? They should return their salary with the request that the money be devoted to the cause, and they should live as the poorest of the poor, bearing all hardships patiently, and giving all their time and energy to the country's service." What a powerful protest this teaching against those who scramble for power and position in the name of patriotism!

He repeatedly asked the officials to reform themselves in order to serve the people. And he realised the truth that the test of a country was not its material wealth but the character of the people. Reform the people,—this was an important point in his political programme. And he endured unpopularity, opposition, insults, for the sake of helping the people to help themselves.

He had to face the cruel intrigues of cliques. From time to time, when troubled by intrigues, he retired to a quiet

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place to fast and pray : and he returned with renewed strength to battle for the right. He believed in the value of fasts. He fasted when intrigues assailed him. He fasted when people suffered from famine. Once, he fasted twenty-one days and prayed, day and night, for his people.

Sad was the condition of the peasants in his days. They were poor, ignorant and many of them, indolent. Sontoku started a "Co-operative Credit Society." It was not merely economic : it was inspired by a moral motive. He brought together the poor for mutual help in agriculture, trade and industry. The dominating motive of his Co-operative Society was to build character on the basis of self-reliance and service.

Dead leaves
Conceal the old path!
Sweep them away and see
The footprints of God!

So wrote this patriot of Japan in one of his pretty little poems. And if Free India is to be a hopeful reality, let the youths sweep away "the dead leaves" which conceal the paths where lie "the footprints of God." Let the young clear away customs and conventions which have long choked the current of our life. That means misunderstanding, misrepresentation, persecution, sacrifice. But sacrifice is the oblation acceptable to God. And the hope of the nation is not in "communalisms" of passion and hate, but in unseen sacrifices of the servants of the people.

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WHAT INDIA NEEDS*

I see a number of camps, today, in India. I believe I am not pessimistic, if I say further that I see signs of a chaos that is coming. I am happy, also, to see little bands of earnest men, who are eager to rebuild India. But to rebuild India, you must first *understand* India, understand her genius, her traditions, her history. And the one great voice, to my mind, of the genius and traditions and history of India is :—"Do not tread the barren path of imitation!"

Trust the guidance of your own genius. When you surrender your genius to another, rest assured, your history is finished. To follow the path of imitation is to become an instrument of alien wills. Trust yourselves! If you are merely desirous of rebuilding India, trust the genius of India, trust the soul of her history and traditions.

Today, we talk of democracy. Do we remember that India developed one of the earliest democracies in history? And the basis of India's democracy, in the long ago, was the village-folk. No bourgeois democracy we need in India, today. We need true democracy. And in a true democracy, a nation is one family, one brotherhood : and the heart of the brotherhood is the village-folk, the peasant and the labourer. Are they truly emancipated ? Are the poor in India emancipated ? Look around you ! Millions are hungry and homeless.

Today, in this ancient land, hungry millions create a situation, which you must face, if you are truly to build a new India. Forgive me, if I say that the task of freedom in India is incomplete.

There is a twofold challenge to India, today. First, the

* Extracts from a lecture delivered in Poona, several years ago.

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challenge of war. The world situation threatens to break into a war at any time. And I have prayed the prayer, over and over again :—"God! give us men!" Wanted men of courage; wanted new *kshatryas*, a new *kshatrya* class. Such men will be lovers of peace : such men will worship peace in their hearts : but such men will, also, realise that eternal vigilance is the price to be paid for freedom. Such men will strengthen peace movements all over the world : and yet such men will have this resolve within them, that you must, loving peace, keep the powder dry.

And the second great challenge to India is the challenge of unemployment, the challenge of poverty. India must needs become economically strong, economically efficient. There is need, I believe, of a peasant movement in India. The peasants have been neglected for a long time. The Indian peasant has several lovable qualities. The Indian peasant has *bhakti* in his heart. The Indian peasant has love and reverence for Rama and Krishna. The Indian peasant is at heart a lover of peace. And we need to take the help of the peasant in our efforts to rebuild India. For India must be more productive if, indeed, India is not to suffer from starvation.

And secondly, we need to build rural industries. Rural industries are a great need of India. Rural industries we need, but not American industrialism. We need a number of cottage industries : we need a number of centres which could give employment to the peasant class.

And so, we stand in need of three great architects for the building of a new India. Three great builders of new India are needed. What are these three?

The first I call the Seer. In ancient India, they used the word *rishi*. Today, so many of those, who have received

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English education, are afraid of the word *rishi*. But national life must be built and nourished by seers or *rishis*. So it was in Italy. Italian nationalism started with the great seer, the great *rishi* of Italy, named Mazzini. And we need in India a number of *rishis*, to give us again the vision, the true vision of freedom.

And the second great architect I call the leader. Leaders are needed. Today, we have politicians : but my heart cries out :—"Where are the leaders?"

I think of Ashoka as one who showed us the true path of leadership. Ashoka was a true leader. Ashoka was the man who was filled with sympathy for all. Not merely tolerance, but *sympathy* is what men want. And Ashoka gave sympathy to all. He spoke not one word against any faith. He spoke of all faiths with beautiful reverence. There was a true leader who realised that in all religions is the one Spirit Divine. I recall a beautiful saying of Ashoka. He said :—"All subjects are my beloved children." What a beautiful saying! And he did reverence to men of all sects, to men of all religions. His ideal was something better and bigger than secularism. His ideal was humanism. He saw the one divine Humanity in all.

In one edict after another, in one pronouncement of his after another, Ashoka taught the people to realise that the true life was the life of him who was a man of righteousness, good *karma*. These are the words Ashoka uses, again and again,—good *karma*. The essence of good life is righteousness. And when they ask him on one occasion :—"O sire! tell us what is the secret of righteousness?" he says :—"Compassion!" What wonderful compassion he had not only for men, but for animals! What wonderful love in his heart for animal life! And he, also, taught that the secret of true statesmanship was truthfulness and sympathy. Ashoka was a true leader of men.

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Four marks of true leadership there be. First, absolute unselfishness. The true leader asks for nothing for himself, but everything for others. Lenin was a true leader of men. They come to him, saying to him :—"You have been our saviour. Have these lands. Have these big buildings. You can live comfortably." What says Lenin? "I want two rooms only"! And this great leader of men, this great saviour of millions of Russia, was content to live in two rooms. There is one mark of the true leader.

And the second mark is simplicity. The true leader is not a man who runs after show and ostentation.

And the third mark of the true leader is judgment. The true leader is a man of judgment. He thinks aright. And, thinking aright, he has the gift of taking multitudes with himself.

And the fourth great mark of the true leader is love for the poor, love for the peasant and the labourer.

But to whom am I speaking? In a broken voice, with a broken heart, I speak to you the words which should go out to many others. I am speaking to those who live in big cities. The true leader of men is he who has love in his heart for the poor, for the peasant, for the labourer. And, therefore, the true leader becomes an instrument of the world-will. The true leader becomes the builder of his nation.

And the third architect I must refer to very briefly. The first architect of the nation is the seer or the *rishi*. The second architect is the leader. The third architect is the social servant. And an important point in the programme of the social servant is education. India needs education of a new type. I haven't the time to tell you of education of the new type, as I conceive of it. I may only say, in this connection, that we, in Poona, are endeavouring to give education of a new type. And we associate it with the honoured name of Mira. We call it the "Mira Movement

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in Education." Mira was a saint : but you forget Mira was, also, a liberator of Indian womanhood. Mira raised her voice and said to the Indian women :—"Come out of your *purdah* and rebuild your homes in the life of purity and simplicity." And Mira was a singer. And Mira was a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna. And Mira was a teacher. I regard her as one of the great teachers of India.

What did she teach? We, in the Mira Institutions in Poona, are endeavouring to pass on her teaching to boys and girls. She taught that the secret of true knowledge is sympathy. And she taught that the secret of true knowledge, the secret of true wisdom is humility. Humility and sympathy were the two notes she sounded, again and again. And I recall the beautiful words in the ancient *Upanishad*. "A true *brahmin* should have the heart of a child!" says the *rishi*. A true teacher should have the heart of a child. A true teacher, a truly learned man, a true *brahmin* should be a man of humility and a man of sympathy.

Such men of sympathy and humility, such men of sympathy and love, such men of sympathy and sacrifice,—they will not be disturbed by errors and misdeeds of men. Such men will love every man, every animal, every plant, every leaf, every ray of light. Such men will rebuild India, I believe. India needs new builders. India needs men who would build in the power of humility and sympathy and love. And when India has thrown up such men in different parts of the country, then, indeed, there will descend upon us a new benediction of the spirit of history. And India will enter into a new era. India will have her seat among the teachers of truth, the teachers of nations. India will have her seat among the healers of humanity.

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THE NEW SYNTHESIS OF GURU NANAK*

When I think of Guru Nanak, there rises before me the picture of St. Francis. Francis passed away in the thirteenth century : in the fifteenth century appeared Guru Nanak. Both were deeply aware of the poor around them, and both saw that the people were in suffering. Both accepted the challenge of poverty and pain : both accepted voluntary poverty and ascetic self-denial. St. Francis wore beggar's clothes : and Guru Nanak lived the life of a *fakir*. Both dressed in the roughest clothes, served lepers and beggars.

Both Francis and Nanak valued heart-knowledge more than book-learning. Both bore witness to the simple life, and both gave to the people the great message :— "Sing His Name!" When at Hardwar, Guru Nanak saw the *bairagis* and *sanyasins*, quarrelling with one another, he said to them :—

You colour your clothes,
But, alas! you walk not in humility!
You forget the Word (Nama) :
You gamble away your souls
For a trifle of earthly honour!
Blessed are the simple who ever dwell
At the Feet of the Lord in love!

If Europe needs today a new St. Francis to awaken the nations to a new sense of responsibility to the poor, does not India need, today, a new Nanak to awaken us to a new sense of unity with the poor and broken ones ?

Guru Nanak renounced "caste" and "creed," and went

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forth to meet all in a spirit of love. St. Francis freed himself of every "privilege" and, in utter poverty, went forth to serve and bless and heal the needy and suffering ones. "Caste and birth," said Nanak, "are of no avail! Ask those who know the Truth." Nanak asked all to "cast out caste and look at the Light within!" When the high priest of Baghdad asked Nanak to what sect he belonged, Nanak said :—

Of no sect am I.
I adore but One God!
Him alone I see in the Earth below,
And the Heavens above,
And in all directions!

The emphasis of Guru Nanak was on the heart and on "golden deeds" of the heart. "God will not ask man," said Nanak, "of what race is he; He will but ask him :— 'What have you done?' " Deeds, not creeds, is what Guru Nanak asked of his disciples. He preached a religion of life,—a religion which would shine in the deeds and lives of men.

Many alas! have lost faith today in religion, because religion has been separated from life. Religion will come back to its own when men will learn to live amicably and helpfully with their fellow-men. Guru Nanak's vision of life embraced all countries, all religions, all races.

Guru Nanak taught the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Civilisation is sinking, today : for there is lack of unity in our lives. Civilisation may be saved if our daily life is built in the new synthesis which Nanak preached. In this synthesis intellect or mind has its place but, also, the heart,—rich and strong. The heart is spiritual vigour. "Great thoughts spring from the heart," said a great thinker of the West. Out of the heart, too,

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springeth love : and in love is the secret of life. In a beautiful song of Guru Nanak we read :—

I have turned my heart into a boat :
I have searched in every sea :
I have dwelt by rivers and streams :
I have bathed at places of pilgrimage :
I have lived in forests and glades :
I have eaten bitter and sweet :
I have seen the remotest regions :
And this have I learnt,
That he is the True Man,
Who loveth God and loveth Man
And, serving all, abideth in Eternal Love!

GURU Nanak travelled far and wide. Western writers say Nanak resembled Paul in the extent of his travels. Nanak travelled much more widely than Paul. Nanak's life was that of a pilgrimage to the Infinite. He preached to the King and Queen of Ceylon. He spoke of his Lord to the *yogis* in the Himalayan *ashramas*. He gave a message on "God,—the Universal Spirit," in front of the Ka'aba, in Mecca. When the Arab priest said to Nanak, "Why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards the Ka'aba,—the seat of God?" Nanak, in deep humility, said :—"Brother, turn my feet in the direction in which God is not!"

In Lahore, the Guru met Duni Chand, a wealthy merchant. The Guru gave Duni Chand a needle and said :—"Duni Chand, keep it with thee, and give it back to me in the next world!"

And Duni Chand said :—"Master! this needle I cannot carry after death : how can I return it?"

"What use, then, Duni Chand, are thy millions to thee?" And Duni Chand was changed. He spent much of what

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he had in the service of the poor, and became a devoted disciple of the Guru.

In his four rounds, Guru Nanak covered India, Tibet, Ceylon and Eastern countries dominated by Islam. Some would have us believe that he, also, visited Egypt and Sudan. Wherever he went, he gave to men and women, of diverse countries and faiths, the message of the One Father-Mother of all, and of the One Brotherhood radiant with the light of simplicity of living, and adoration and love of the Divine.

To all Guru Nanak gave the love of his heart. His love converted robbers like Shaikh Sajjan. In love he spoke to the *mullahs* of Mecca and his words went into their hearts. Nanak's love rivetted to him Mardana who accompanied the Master to Afghanistan and Lanka, to Mecca and Medina, to Baghdad and Multan. Nanak's love flowed out to Lehna, and this worshipper of Durga became "Angad," a "limb" of the Master's Body, an integral part of Nanak's radiant soul.

In this night of civilisation let India meditate on the Guru's great message of the Life of Love. And in his pure, sacrificial life and song, let India find a new alphabet of that true Freedom which reflects the Inner Light of the Heart.

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THE DESTINY OF INDIA*

I KNOW of the efforts of a number of my esteemed countrymen to eliminate religion from national life. What will you think of a man taking a pocket-knife to cut down a forest on a mountain side? Professor Tiele speaks of religion as "one of the mightiest motors, in the history of mankind." You cannot eliminate it. You must come to terms with it.

As I wrote in an earlier letter, a "League of Religions" must be organised to meet the challenge of the new mentality which reduces man to machine.

India still will wander from unrest to unrest, until she recovers the Wisdom of her Rishis and re-discovers the God who hath embraced and reconciled in Himself all races and all religions,—the God of Love!

My soul is in agony and seeks to be somewhere alone with the Alone, to get from Him,—the All-Giver,—light, more light, strength, more strength, for the service of a broken, bleeding world.

India's need is something bigger than "nationalism." Love is our need. For Love is creative. And greater than Lenin and Stalin are Krishna, Buddha and Christ. India will be saved by a movement of love.

What the sad world needs most urgently is regeneration from within.

Each nation has its mission. But the mission of no one is all comprehensive. The nations need one another. And history will not fulfil its hidden purpose until the nations form one family in God.

For freedom, as I understand it, is fellowship. And

* In a letter.

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a new era will not open until the nations renounce repression and war and all counsels of hate and strife.

This unrest, methinks, is but the messenger of a flood which has only begun to flow.

The world-forces are marching on! Are they not knocking already at India's gate?

If India can adjust her life to them in time, she will become a servant of the nations and a saviour of civilisation.

If she fails in the task of self-adjustment, then the flood will be a deluge.

And a new chaos will enter into the historic process, which aims at resisting the political ascendancy of the West and using the rich and diverse gifts of the Orient and the Occident in the service of a new Humanism and a new Civilisation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

By the Editor

RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS DISCIPLES by Christopher Isherwood. [Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 14] : Rs. 12·50

[Also published by Methuen & Co. Ltd., Ludgate Circus 9855, 11 New Fetter Lane, London E. C. 4] : 36s.

At rare intervals in history appears a man like Sri Ramakrishna. He came to reconcile races and religions. He came to proclaim the sovereignty of love. He stood for the weak and the fallen. And he realised that what man needed was not food or clothes or shelter : man's only need was God!

Christopher Isherwood has written a fascinating biography of the Saint of Dakshineshwar. In his own charming style, he recounts the absorbing story of this God-man who, living far from the madding crowds of critics and controversialists, influenced the lives of a few aspiring souls and laid the foundations of a new movement which, today, has spread all over the world. All the important incidents in the life of Sri Ramakrishna have been touched. And what Mr. Isherwood touches, he transforms. The result is a vivid picture of Sri Ramakrishna of great charm and beauty. The Holy Mother has been assigned her due place in the biography. The account of Swami Vivekananda is a marvel of compression and condensation. Swami Brahmananda and his fellow monastic disciples have been beautifully portrayed.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna is a scripture for the new age. And this book, I have no doubt, will be read with interest and devotion not only by Ramakrishna lovers but by many seekers of Truth. Each chapter is a nugget of wisdom.

THE WITNESS by Sadhu Ittyavirah. [Sadhu Ittyavirah, Anthinad P. O., Kottayam Dt., Kerala, S. India] : Rs. 3.

Like the evangelists of old, Sadhu Ittyavirah moves from place to place, spreading the message of the love of God

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and the brotherhood of man. God, to him, is the one reality of life. And in his heart burns the flame of the love of God. This love binds society, builds nations, renovates civilisation. In this love is the healing of India and humanity. In this love will the nations become one and, renouncing sectarianism and violence, build a new, divine humanity.

Carrying the love of God in his heart, Sadhu Ittyavirah travels, from place to place, as an *akinchinah*, a homeless wanderer. He eats what he is offered : he sleeps where the night finds him. He meets peasants and villagers : he speaks to men and women in the cities. He comes in contact with people in different walks of life. To all he speaks from the heart. And his words go into the hearts of his hearers with a strange appeal. When he looks at a brother or sister, he looks with love in his heart,—the pure, passionless love of a true disciple of Christ.

In this book is given a delightful account of the conversations Sadhu Ittyavirah has had with the many types of people with whom he has come in contact in his wanderings. In these pages you will meet scientists speaking unscientific language, philanthropists ever conscious of their benefactions, pigs that grow faster than men, Catholics who avoid meeting Protestants. To them all he passes on, in a variety of ways, the one message :—God is love! Love ye one another! Is not this message the one piteous need of the modern world madly rushing from danger to destruction?

The Witness is a book full of ideas and inspiration.

(1) DHYANA YOGA (2) SIKH MYSTICISM both by Dr. Mohan Singh Uberoi Dewana. [Dhyana Yoga Mandira, 57, Sector 16-A, Chandigarh H-2].

Dr. Mohan Singh is a philosopher with a rich mind and radiant simplicity. In this period of intellectual confusion and moral chaos, he believes in,—and calls upon all who would hear him to build their lives in,—inner forces. He has come in contact with saints, seers and mystics; and his writings show that he has a considerable knowledge of the interior kingdom, the Kingdom of the Spirit.

In the *Dhyana Yoga* is given a translation of and a commentary on the *Yogaraja Upanishad*. The treatment of the subject as given in this text, is entirely different from that

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set forth in Patanjali's *Yogasutras*. Extracts from other authorities have been appended to clarify several intricate points. Dr. Mohan Singh has added some remarkable observations based on his own experience.

In *Sikh Mysticism*, the learned author elaborates the sevenfold yoga of Sikhism, the seven types being :—(1) Guru Chela Yoga; (2) Nama Simran Yoga; (3) Kirtan Yoga; (4) Sahaj Yoga; (5) Hukam Yoga; (6) Qudrat Yoga; and (7) Jivana Yoga.

Dr. Mohan Singh is careful to point out that books can be no substitute for a Guru. His own books are written "to persuade you to seek a teacher or, better, to condition yourself for receiving the teacher when he comes to you of himself as a sign of his grace. The word is dead on paper, on clay, on stone, on parchment, on leaf; it lives and operates only on the sealed lips of the Muni, the Avadhuta, the Natha, the Mahasiddha."

PATH TO BEATIFIC PEACE : Volumes I and II by Divine Mother Sree Ramā Devi. [Ramā Sakti Mission, Mangalore]. Vol. I, Rs. 2·25; Vol. II, Rs. 3.50.

The most urgent need of the nations, today, is peace. But peace is a flower which grows in the soil of simplicity and unselfish living. Today, there is a scramble for greatness, for wealth, for prominence and power. The watchword of our age is progress. And this progress means industrialism, commercialism, overpopulated cities, unhealthy rivalries, class-strife, passion and hate. Where is peace?

Listen to the words of Sree Ramā Devi :—"The mind that is attuned to the profound silence of the Self within, will remain absolutely impervious to the storm and stress of the external world. This is the secret of peace which Mother wants Her children to discover by directing their vision to their own reality of being."

In the two volumes under review have been brought together extracts from Sree Ramā Devi's letters to devotees and disciples, to friends and seekers on the Path. Both the volumes are replete with instructions on how the seeker may tread the Path that leads to peace. It is the path of love and detachment, and singing God's Name in a song that knows no ending.

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